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YOUNG AVENGERS®

HEINBERG
CHEUNG
MEIKIS

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YOUNG AVENGERS

FAMILY MATTERS

PART ONE

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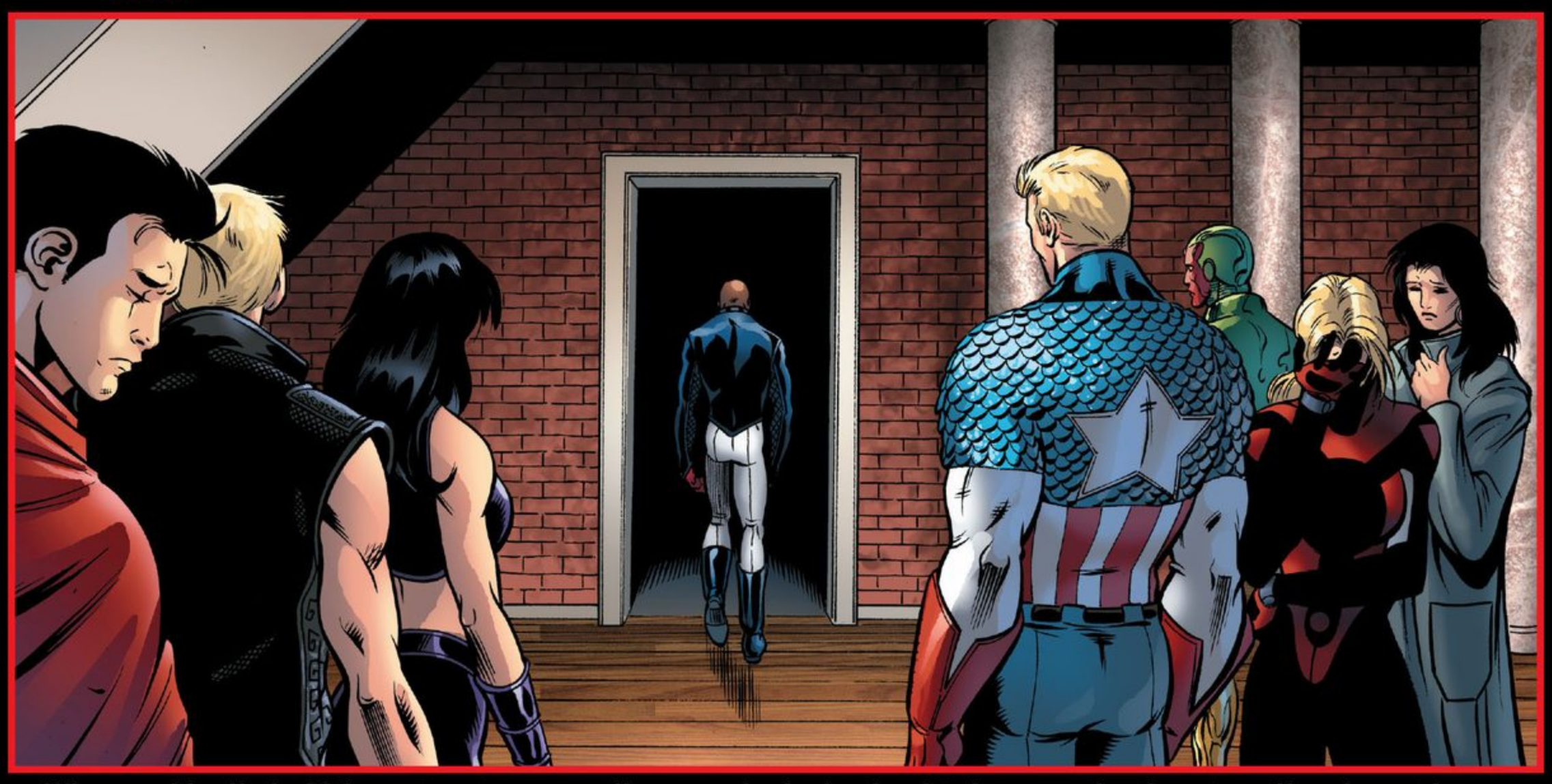

When an idealistic 30th-century teenager discovers he is destined to become the time-traveling despot known as KANG THE CONQUEROR, he travels back to the 21st century to enlist the aid of Kang's greatest adversaries, THE AVENGERS.

However, when young Kang arrives in the present, he is stunned to learn that the Avengers have officially disbanded. With nowhere to turn, he uses his futuristic armor to break into Stark Industries, where he downloads the programming and data files of the decommissioned android Avenger THE VISION into his armor's firmware.

Discovering a fail-safe program of the Vision's designed to pinpoint the exact locations of the next wave of Avengers, young Kang puts together a new team of super-powered teens, who, in an homage to the original Avengers, present themselves to the world as their would-be teenage sidekicks.

Dubbed "The Young Avengers" by the press, IRON LAD, PATRIOT, WICCAN and HULKLING, are soon joined by STATURE (Cassie Lang, the daughter of the recently deceased ANT-MAN) and KATE BISHOP, a resourceful teenage Avenger's fan who saved the team's lives during one of their early adventures.

After a recent battle against the Avengers' longtime adversary MISTER HYDE, Patriot is forced to reveal that he does not have super powers. Attempting to live up to the legend of his grandfather, the fabled "Black Captain America," Eli confesses he's been using mutant growth hormone, a steroid, instead. Ashamed of his actions, Eli quits the team.

Rocked by Eli's departure and bowing to pressure from Captain America and Iron Man to disband, the Young Avengers now face an uncertain future…

YOUNG AVENGERS created by Allan Heinberg and Jim Cheung

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THE BRONX

...AND AT YESTERDAY'S PRESS CONFERENCE, CAPTAIN AMERICA MADE HIS **FIRST** PUBLIC STATEMENT ABOUT THE SO-CALLED "YOUNG AVENGERS."

THE YOUNG AVENGERS ARE A GROUP OF INCREDIBLY BRAVE, GIFTED KIDS WHOSE **HEARTS** ARE IN THE RIGHT PLACE...

...BUT BECAUSE OF THEIR YOUTH AND INEXPERIENCE...

...IRON MAN AND I ARE SUPPORTING THEIR DECISION TO DISBAND FOR THE TIME BEING.

ELI?

YOU COMING RIGHT HOME AFTER SCHOOL?

I TOLD MS. DORSEY I'D WORK THE REFERENCE DESK TILL SEVEN.

SO, IF I CALL THE LIBRARY, YOU'LL *BE* THERE?

DON'T WORRY, GRANDMA.

I'LL *BE* THERE.

SPID

YOUNG AVENGER NO MORE?

STUYVESANT HIGH SCHOOL

WHAT TIME DO YOU WANT ME TO PICK YOU UP?

I CAN TAKE THE SUBWAY.

...MALE CAUCASIAN STANDING ON TOP OF THE FLATIRON BUILDING, THREATENING TO JUMP...

YOU'RE *NOT* TAKING THE SUBWAY. I'LL BE BACK HERE AT--

BE QUIET A SEC.

...POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS ARE ON THE SCENE, BUT MOTORISTS AND PEDESTRIANS ARE ADVISED TO AVOID THE FLATIRON DISTRICT UNTIL RESCUE TEAMS HAVE CLEARED THE AREA.

I HAVE TO GO.

OH, *NO*, YOU DON'T.

THE POLICE HAVE IT UNDER *CONTROL*, YOUNG LADY.

BUT AT *GIANT-SIZE* I COULD JUST GRAB HIM AND--

YOU ARE *FOURTEEN* YEARS OLD.

IF YOU STILL WANT TO BE A SUPER HERO WHEN YOU'RE *EIGHTEEN*, I CAN'T STOP YOU...

...BUT UNTIL *THEN*...

...THE ONLY PLACE YOU'RE GOING IS *SCHOOL*.

FINE.

DON'T EVEN *THINK* ABOUT IT.

I *WASN'T*.

I'LL BE BACK AT *THREE*.

I'LL TAKE THE SUBWAY.

CASSIE--

BYE.

THE FLATIRON DISTRICT

...MOTORISTS AND PEDESTRIANS ARE ADVISED TO AVOID THE FLATIRON DISTRICT UNTIL RESCUE TEAMS HAVE CLEARED THE...

HONK HONK

BEEP! BEEP!

C'MON...

NO...

OH, MY GOD...

IWANTTO CATCHHIM, IWANT TOCATCHHIM, IWANT TOCATCHHIM, IWANT TOCATCHHIM...

DID YOU SEE THAT?

IT'S MS. MARVEL.

EASY, SIR. I'VE GOT YOU.

SHE SAVED HIS LIFE.

HE'S GONNA BE PISSED.

THANK GOD FOR SUPER HEROES, RIGHT?

OTHERWISE WE'D NEVER GET TO WORK ON TIME.

YIKES.

IWANTTO GETTOSCHOOL ONTIME, IWANTTO GETTOSCHOOL ONTIME...

HAWTHORNE ACADEMY

"YOUNG AVENGERS NO MORE"?

PUT THE PAPER *DOWN* AND TURN AROUND.

SLOWLY.

WHEN YOU'RE *DISTRACTED*, YOU LEAVE YOURSELF OPEN TO ATTACK.

AND LATELY YOU'RE DISTRACTED ALL THE TIME, MS. BISHOP.

I'M *CONCERNED.*

AND YOU'RE SHOWING YOUR *CONCERN...*

...BY TRYING TO *EMBARRASS* ME IN FRONT OF THE OTHER STUDENTS?

GOOD THING I DON'T EMBARRASS EASILY.

STOP!
STOP THAT MAN!
HE STOLE MY PURSE!
EXCUSE ME, SIR, BUT THAT *PURSE*...?
...IT DOESN'T REALLY GO WITH YOUR *SHOES*.
OOPS.
WHO-- WHAT *ARE* YOU?
I'M...REED RICHARDS OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR.
AND YOU, SIR, ARE UNDER ARREST.
JUST AS SOON AS I FIND A POLICEMAN.
NICE WORK, "MR. FANTASTIC."

I THOUGHT WE AGREED TO LIE *LOW* FOR A WHILE.

C'MON, THE GUY STOLE HER *PURSE.* YOU WOULD'VE DONE THE *SAME* THING.

MAYBE WITH A LITTLE MORE *SUBTLETY,* BUT...

ARE YOU KIDDING? I CAME *THIS* CLOSE TO SKIPPING SCHOOL WHEN I HEARD ABOUT THE FLATIRON JUMPER THIS MORNING.

ME, TOO.

I WAS *THERE*--AND THREE WORDS INTO AN ANTI-GRAVITY SPELL--WHEN MS. MARVEL SHOWED UP.

IF I HADN'T ENCHANTED MY BIKE, I TOTALLY WOULD'VE MISSED FIRST PERIOD. AGAIN.

SO, WHAT DO WE *DO?* WE OBVIOUSLY CAN'T STOP PLAYING HERO, EVEN IF WE'RE NOT IN *UNIFORM.*

MAYBE WE *SHOULD* JUST TELL OUR FOLKS AND DEAL WITH THE CONSEQUENCES.

BELIEVE ME, THAT'S THE ONE THING YOU *DON'T* WANT TO DO.

MY MOM'S BEEN A MESS SINCE SHE FOUND OUT.

SHE'S TERRIFIED I'M GONNA GET MYSELF KILLED. AND EVEN MORE AFRAID OF WHAT COULD HAPPEN IF MY STEPFATHER FINDS OUT.

AND EVEN IF OUR PARENTS WERE SOMEHOW MIRACULOUSLY OKAY WITH IT...

...WHICH THEY WON'T BE...

...IT WOULDN'T BE THE SAME WITHOUT ELI.

YOU GUYS DIDN'T HEAR FROM HIM TODAY, DID YOU?

NO. HE'S STILL NOT RETURNING MY CALLS. OR MY EMAILS. OR MY TEXTS.

MINE, EITHER.

SAME HERE.

AND NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I TRY TO TELL HIM THAT WE GET IT--HE DID WHAT HE FELT HE HAD TO DO...

...HE DOESN'T CALL, HE DOESN'T WRITE BACK...

SO NOW WE'RE GOING TO DO WHAT WE HAVE TO DO.

YOU GUYS READY?

I CAN'T *BELIEVE* THIS.

YOU GUYS *CANNOT* BE HERE.

ELI, WE JUST WANT TO *TALK*.

THERE'S NOTHING TO *TALK* ABOUT.

ELI, *PLEASE*--

WHAT ELSE DO YOU WANT ME TO *SAY*?

I *LIED* TO YOU GUYS--

--I PRETENDED I WAS A *HERO*--

--BUT IT WASN'T *ME*, IT WAS THE *DRUG*.

THE DRUG MIGHT HAVE MADE YOU *STRONGER*...

...BUT *YOU'RE* THE ONE WHO FOUGHT *KANG THE CONQUEROR*.

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO STOPPED *MR. HYDE*.

AND YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN LEAD THIS TEAM.

HOW?
I DON'T HAVE ANY POWERS.
SO? NEITHER DOES KATE.
THANKS, CASSIE.
IT'S NOT ABOUT THE POWERS, ELI.
YOU KNOW THAT.
I CAN'T.
I'M SORRY.
ELI, WAIT--
UH-OH...
SEE, THIS IS WHAT I GET FOR BADLY IMPERSONATING...

...THE SUPER-SKRULL?!

HAVE NO FEAR, HATCHLING.

IN THE NAME OF THE SKRULL EMPIRE...

...I HAVE COME TO BRING YOU HOME.

TEDDY!

I HATE TO BREAK THIS TO YOU, BUDDY...

BUT I'M NOT A SKRULL.

I'M A MUTANT.

THAT IS WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN PROGRAMMED TO BELIEVE.

BUT I PROMISE, YOU WILL SEE THE TRUTH...

...ONCE FREED FROM YOUR EARTHLY DISTRACTIONS.

WHAT DO WE *DO?*

WE CAN'T FIGHT WITHOUT BLOWING OUR COVER.

WHO *CARES?* HE'S GOT *TEDDY!*

NOT FOR LONG.

GOTCHA!

AAOOW!

CASSIE, NO!

THAT HURT!

GUYS! INCOMING!

MAY I MAKE A SUGGESTION?

PLEASE.

RUN!

SHOOM

ELI, GET CASS AND TEDDY OUT OF HERE.

BILLY AND I WILL DISTRACT THE SUPER-SKRULL.

WITH A BOW AND ARROWS?

KATE, HE'S GOT *ALL* THE POWERS OF THE *FANTASTIC FOUR*...

...FORCE-FIELDS, INVISIBILITY, FLAMMABILITY, STRETCHABILITY, *THING*-ABILITY...

WHAT AM I FORGETTING?

HYPNOSIS.

YOUR FRIEND'S WILL IS *MINE* TO COMMAND.

LET HIM GO, AND I'LL GO *WITH* YOU.

HULKLING, *NO!*

YOUR TIME AMONG HUMANS HAS MADE YOU *WEAK*, YOUNG ONE.

YOUR *SHAPE-SHIFTING* ABILITIES SUGGEST OTHERWISE.

I'M *TELLING* YOU, I *AM* HUMAN.

BUT I THOUGHT *YOU* WERE SUPPOSED TO BE THE ONLY SKRULL WITH SUPER-STRENGTH.

YOU POSSESS SUPER-STRENGTH?

WELL, I DON'T LIKE TO *BRAG*, BUT...

...YEAH.

DAMN.

THAT WAS SOME PUNCH.

I CAN'T EVEN *SEE* HIM, CAN YOU?

HE SMASHED INTO THE SIDE OF THAT OFFICE BUILDING.

OOPS.

SUPER-SKRULL TO HIGH COMMAND.

THE HATCHLING *DOES* POSSESS IMPRESSIVE STRENGTH.

PERHAPS THE RUMORS ABOUT HIS FATHER ARE *TRUE*.

NO MATTER. HE SHALL NOT ESCAPE THE SUPER-SKRULL...

"...OR HIS *DESTINY*."

DID HE *SEE* US?

I DON'T THINK SO.

SO, WHERE DO WE *GO*?

MY HOUSE. IT'S CLOSEST.

GUYS, I *CAN'T*.

ELI, WE *NEED* YOU.

LOOK, I *APPRECIATE* WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO DO...

"...BUT YOU'RE BETTER OFF *WITHOUT* ME."

MY MOM'S NOT ANSWERING HER PHONE.
YOU THINK THE SUPER-SKRULL WOULD GO AFTER YOUR *MOM?*
IF HE THINKS *I'M* A SKRULL--
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CAN I ASK A TERRIBLE QUESTION?
THAT'S THE ONE.
"HOW DO I KNOW MY MOM'S **NOT** A SKRULL?"
BECAUSE SHE'S MY *MOM.*
SHE SELLS *REAL ESTATE.* SHE DOES *PILATES.* SHE'S NOT A *SKRULL.*
WHAT ABOUT YOUR *DAD?*
I'M SORRY.
HE DIED BEFORE I WAS BORN. CANCER.
BUT MY MOM SAID HE WAS A GOOD GUY.
I SHOULD GO HOME AND SEE IF SHE'S OKAY.
HOME IS THE *FIRST* PLACE THE SUPER-SKRULL'S GOING TO LOOK FOR YOU.
RIGHT, BUT IF MY *MOM* IS THERE, HE'LL--
TEDDY, WE'RE OUT OF OUR *LEAGUE.*
WE NEED TO CALL THE AVENGERS, COME UP WITH A *PLAN,* AND *THEN* WE'LL FIND YOUR--

MOM!
MRS. ALTMAN!
OH, THANK GOD, YOU'RE ALL RIGHT.
MOM, WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHAT ARE YOU *DOING* HERE?
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR *CLOTHES?*
TEDDY'S MOM CALLED LOOKING FOR HIM. SHE SOUNDED *UPSET*, SO I--
LONG STORY.
YOU OKAY?
HONEY, THERE'S SOME-THING I HAVE TO *TELL* YOU...
BOOM

ELI!

NO MORE HIDING, LAD.

COME WITH ME AND WE WILL RESTORE THE SKRULL EMPIRE TO ITS FORMER GLORY...

...OR YOUR FRIEND WILL *DIE*.

DON'T LISTEN TO HIM, TEDDY.

WHAT'S HAPPENING? WHAT'S GOING *ON?*

IT'S OKAY, MOM. WE'RE SUPER HEROES. I MEANT TO *TELL* YOU.

LET ELI *GO*, AND I'LL COME *WITH* YOU.

TEDDY, *NO!*

IT'S OKAY, MOM. ONCE HE SEES I'M NOT A *SKRULL--*

BUT YOU *ARE*, HATCHLING.

I WILL *PROVE* IT...

... BY REVERTING YOU TO YOUR ORIGINAL FORM.

TEDDY!

NO!

MOM! STAND BACK!

I'M STILL ME.
SEE? I TOLD YOU I'M NOT A--
OH, NO...
MRS. ALTMAN...?
TEDDY, I CAN EXPLAIN.
MOM...?
THIS FEMALE IS NOT YOUR MOTHER.
SHE IS A TRAITOR TO HER RACE.
THE EMPRESS ORDERED ME TO PROTECT HIM...
...EVEN FROM THE LIKES OF YOU.
SZZZZT
AGGHHH!

CONSIDER YOUR ORDERS *TERMINATED.*

MOM!

AGGGGHHH!

BILLY, DO SOME-THING!

I'M *TRYING!*

IWANT HERTOBEOKAY, IWANTHERTOBE OKAY,IWANTHER TOBEOKAY...

BILLY...

...SHE'S GONE.

GUYS...?

...SO IS TEDDY.

TO BE CONTINUED...

EMPIRE
ZONE
EMPIRE
ZONE
KL!Z8